

# MAD SCIENTIST

Issue 11

Spring 2005

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**IT!**  
**THE TERROR FROM**  
**BEYOND**  
**SPACE!**

**DINOSAUR**  
**COMICS!**

**THEY CAME**  
**FROM**  
**HOLLYWOOD!**

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**Front Cover:** *It! The Terror from Beyond Space*. Illustration by Rich Larson ([www.fastnerandlarson.com](http://www.fastnerandlarson.com)).

**Page 21:** *Godzilla*, from *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962). Pencil drawing by Chris Scalf ([www.chrisscalf.com](http://www.chrisscalf.com)).

**Inside Back Cover:** Marty the Mutant, from *Day the World Ended* (1956), by Mark Jiro Okui.

**Back Cover:** Vampire vixen. Pencil drawing by Dave Aikins.

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Special thanks to Pam Arlt, J.D. Lees, Rich Larson, Tony Isabella, and Sparky!

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Be sure to check out the Mad Scientist web site at:

<http://www.geocities.com/madscie/madscientist.html>

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# I BID YOU WELCOME...

Welcome to the eleventh issue of *Mad Scientist*. Five years down! It's hard to believe the time has gone so quickly. And sometimes, it's hard to believe I've managed to maintain a steady semi-annual publishing schedule. I don't mind telling you though, this issue required a few late nights to get it done!

To the right is Giant Robo, from *Johnny Sokko and his Flying Robot*, one of my must-see television shows as a child in the 1970s. I decided to put one of my favorite robots on this page, because I have to come clean about the Top 10 Robots list I printed in issue 9. Simply put, I screwed it up. Several readers have taken me to task for neglecting to include some of their favorite robots. While some suggestions still would not have made the list had I thought of them at the time, others represented a substantial oversight. While I stand by most of my choices, like Robby the Robot, the Daleks, and Gort, I can't justify leaving out the likes of the Robot from *Lost in Space* (who was on my original list, and somehow got lost in the shuffle). All I can say is, in the rush to get the issue done, I completely forgot some important TV and movie 'bots. So, sorry to Robot, Astro Boy, Giant Robo, and others who didn't make the cut, not because they weren't deserving, but because I just didn't think of them.

This issue we've got the usual bag of goodies. The film of the issue is *It, the Terror from Beyond Space*, which I think is much better than its obscurity suggests. "Haunted Crypt of Reviews" is back again. "Vault of Comics" takes a break this issue to make room for an interview I did with one of the creators of the upcoming *They Came from Hollywood* computer game. "Tales from the Lab" returns to my youth with another adventure in filmmaking, this time a live-action horror flick. New to this issue is part one of a series of articles on collecting dinosaur comics, by Pat McCauslin & Andrew Simpson. All this and more wrapped up in a brand new cover by Rich Larson. What more could you want?



# THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE

## A REVIEW

by Martin Arlt

### The story:

At a press conference in 1964, a military officer explains that the second rocket to Mars is returning home with the sole survivor of the first expedition. Colonel Ed Carruthers is being brought back to Earth under arrest for the murder of the rest of his crew.

On Mars, as the space ship carrying Carruthers is preparing for takeoff, we see the clawed feet of some alien creature moving on board. Once the ship is on course for Earth, the crew goes about their business. The ship's commander, Colonel James Van Heusen, shows Carruthers the main evidence against him: the skull of one of his crewmates with a bullet hole through the forehead. He maintains that Carruthers, after his ship was disabled, killed his crew in order to increase his chances of survival by stretching out the supplies.

Van Heusen disregards Carruthers' claims that there was a powerful, savage monster on Mars that killed the crew. Carruthers explains the bullet hole in the skull with a tale in which the crewman was taken by the monster, causing the rest of the crew to open fire. Presumably one of the bullets hit the crewman.

Soon, the stowaway monster claims his first victim, Kienholz the





A close-up of the title monster in *It! The Terror from Beyond Space*, showcasing its effectively repulsive design.

biologist. The only one who hears his screams is Carruthers. While no one believes his story, the crew conducts a search for Kienholz, during which the monster claims its second victim, Gino. During the search, the crew discovers Kienholz's dead body in a ventilation duct. Crawling inside, a crew member discovers Gino, barely alive. The monster attacks before

Gino can be rescued. The remaining crew attaches hand grenades to the vent and retreats from the compartment.

Soon, they hear the sound of the grenades exploding, indicating that the creature is on the move. They cautiously move down to the lower chamber, but the monster is waiting for them and chases them back up the ladder. They drop gas bombs on it, to no effect. The monster claws Van Heusen's ankle before they can seal the hatch to the chamber.

An autopsy of Kienholz's body reveals that all fluid was absorbed, including blood, water, and bone marrow. In addition, Van Heusen's injury has made him ill with an infection against which they have no remedy. He needs blood to survive, and the blood is two levels below, with the beast in between. Carruthers and a crewman conduct a space walk and reenter the ship at the lower level. The monster hears them and attacks, injuring the crewman and trapping him behind some equipment. Carruthers escapes.

After several other unsuccessful efforts to kill the monster, including an attempt by the delirious Van Heusen to kill it by unshielding the reactor core, the monster finally forces its way through the ship's bulkheads to attack the remaining crew. Carruthers notes that oxygen consumption on the ship is far higher than expected, given the size of the crew. The extra oxygen usage must be due to the monster. Everyone dons their space suits just as the monster reaches the top level. Van Heusen opens the airlocks, but not before the monster can kill him. With the atmosphere purged from the ship, the monster suffocates and dies.

\* \* \*

While many of the classic science fiction films of the 1950s came out of large, established studios, like Warner Brothers and Universal, much of the decade's genre output came from smaller, independent companies. The small film companies that are most often associated with the science fiction films of the 1950s are American International Pictures and Allied Artists. Producer Robert Kent convinced United Artists to try to get a piece of the monster action. The popularity of monster flicks was growing rapidly, as evidenced by the early success of the magazine, *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, and its imitators. Kent felt that if United Artists threw their hat into the ring, they would quickly turn an easy profit. United Artists agreed, and soon work began on the sci-fi thriller, *It! The Terror from Beyond Space*. To work on the film, Kent contacted two AIP alumni, director Eddie Cahn and monster-maker Paul Blaisdell.

The script-writing chores on *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* went to Jerome Bixby. Bixby was a science fiction writer and editor in the 1950s. He edited the magazine, *Planet Stories*, from 1950 to 1951, where he eschewed space opera for intelligent mood pieces. Among his stories was "It's a Good Life" (1953), which was adapted by Rod Serling on *The Twilight Zone*. He would go on to write for television, including the classic episode of the original *Star Trek*, "Mirror Mirror" (1967). His list of genre film screenplays is short, including *The Lost Missile* (1958), *Curse of the Faceless Man* (1958), and *Fantastic Voyage* (1966).

Bixby found inspiration in other sci-fi films of the period. He reports that Howard Hawks' *The Thing from Another World* (1951) served as the catalyst for *It!* *The Thing* featured a small group of people trapped in an isolated setting faced with an unstoppable monster, and Bixby decided to try something similar, but in an even more inhospitable setting, one with absolutely no means of escape: outer space. Bixby's original script featured rushed, overlapping dialog, like that found in Hawks' film. Unfortunately, there was little time to rehearse such strangely-constructed dialog, and the end result was stylized and stilted lines, delivered like standard dialog. Bixby recalled working on the script for *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* while sitting on a beach at Venice, California. One day, a gust of wind blew half the script into the ocean, forcing Bixby to reconstruct the story from what he could remember writing. Given the tight schedules involved in making such films, it must have been a nightmare to get it all done in time.



One of *It's* victims, drained of his fluids, is discovered in a ventilation shaft.

An early draft of the script introduced the idea that oxygen consumption on the space ship has dramatically increased, before the crew is even aware of their alien stowaway. This plot element, revealed early on, served several purposes. First, it gave the characters their first clue that all is not well on board. It also laid the foundation for the film's climax, in which the crew suffocates the alien. Finally, it added a layer of tension to the story by making the battle with the monster a race against time, as the crew would not have enough oxygen to reach Earth. Sadly, with this idea removed from the final film, the sudden discovery that the monster has a large oxygen consumption feels forced and contrived.

When it came time to hire someone to handle the task of building the alien costume, United Artists turned to Paul Blaisdell, who had a reputation for constructing quality monster effects on a limited budget. His work had already been seen in films like *The Day the World Ended* (1956), *The She-Creature* (1956), *It Conquered the World* (1956), and *Invasion of the Saucer Men* (1957). Born in 1927, Blaisdell's childhood was spent attracting the ire of his teachers because of his habit of drawing and doodling in class, rather than attending to his studies. He later studied commercial art at the New England School of Art and Design on the G.I. Bill after his discharge from the army in 1947. Soon, he was putting his imagination to work painting covers and producing interior drawings for science fiction magazines, like *Spaceway*, *Other Worlds*, and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. His agent during this time was Forrest J. Ackerman, who would later become famous as the editor of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. When Roger Corman needed a quick but cheap monster to salvage the film *The Beast with a Million Eyes* (1955), Ackerman gave Blaisdell a call. Even though he lacked film experience, Paul Blaisdell was given the job that started his monster-making career.

When Robert E. Kent offered Paul Blaisdell the job of building the title monster for *It! The Terror from Beyond Space*, Blaisdell asked to read a finished script first. He felt he had been exploited by ALP, and wanted to be sure that the film was ready to go, and that there wouldn't be any surprises after he started work. Upon reading Bixby's script, Blaisdell felt reassured that it would be a fairly straightforward assignment, and agreed to do it.

Blaisdell began work designing It. He decided that everything about the monster was going to be big. It would have a large, barrel-shaped chest providing the lung capacity necessary to survive on a world with a thin atmosphere like Mars. It would be strong, with big claws and rows of sharp teeth. When he took on the assignment, Blaisdell assumed that he would be playing the part of It, as he had with his previous monsters. To that end, the monster head he designed was scaly but sleek, not boxy like the finished product that appeared in the film. Unfortunately for Blaisdell, the film's executive producer, Ed Small, decided to hire Ray Corrigan to play the monster instead.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Ray Corrigan had been a popular star of Saturday matinees, appearing in serials like *Undersea Kingdom* (1936). He was also no stranger to working in costumes, as he played gorillas in various films, including *Tarzan and His Mate* (1934), *Captive Wild Women* (1943), and *The Monster and the Ape* (1945). By the 1950s, his career was in a slump, partly due to his



On the left, Blaisdell's original clay sculpture of It's head. On the right, the finished mask (with added scaly ridges on the neck, that are absent in the sculpture. Also absent is the lower row of teeth that were added after Corrigan's chin was found to protrude through the mouth. Both the sculpture and the mask show a much less boxy, deformed shape than what appeared in the film when the ill-fitting mask was pulled over Corrigan's head.

excessive drinking. At times, he could be very uncooperative, and it was this aspect of his personality that led to problems early on with the monster costume on *It!*. Corrigan simply refused to make the trip out to Blaisdell's house to be measured for the suit. Ultimately, he did send a pair of long underwear that Blaisdell was able to use as the basis for constructing the suit. The longjohns ensured the costume would be a perfect fit. Latex scales were made and glued onto the underwear in overlapping patterns, and the body of the costume was finished. Hands and feet were constructed over a pair of workgloves and sneakers, completing the costume.

The mask was another matter. With Corrigan unavailable for measurements, Blaisdell had no choice but to build the mask using a bust of his own head as a foundation. He built the mask, keeping it simple, in the hopes that the latex would be able to stretch enough to make up any differences in head size. Unfortunately, the mask was too small for Corrigan's head, and when he forced it on, his chin protruded from the mouth. There was no time in which to redo the mask. The film's makeup artist, Lane Britton, came up with an idea to salvage the situation: paint Corrigan's chin with makeup to make it look like a tongue. To finish the illusion, Blaisdell created a row of teeth to put in the bottom jaw, making the monster look less buck-toothed.

The costume troubles didn't end with making the mask. On set, the costume tore and lost scales, reportedly due to Corrigan's overzealous





One of several shots in which Blaisdell's creation is shown much too clearly, reducing the sense of menace that It should have conveyed in the film.

performance, but just as likely because no one on the set knew how to seal him into the suit properly. Jerome Bixby recalled that it seemed as though they were constantly searching the studio floor for missing scales to be glued back on. The discomfort of the mask led to several other unfortunate incidents. In one shot, the monster was to be seen in shadow. Corrigan refused to wear the mask, despite the fact that the silhouette of his head was notably different from that of It. No amount of arguing by director Eddie Cahn could convince Corrigan to don the mask, and the shot was filmed without it. Sure enough, in the finished film, the scene is marred by the shadow of Corrigan's human head perched atop the massive monster. In another shot, the mask had slipped down, covering Corrigan's eyes. He simply used his hands to shift the mask back in place, while on camera. For some unknown reason, this closeup shot was used in the finished film.

Bixby was disappointed with Corrigan's performance as It. When he wrote the script, Bixby envisioned the monster being very swift and agile. But once Corrigan put on the costume, he essentially reverted back to the standard lumbering gorilla performance he had done so often.

All was not doom and gloom on the set, however. One of Jerome Bixby's more vivid memories of his visits to the set of *It!* was of Ray Corrigan, in costume, inviting ladies to touch the fangs, then growling and snapping at them when their fingers were close. Marshall Thompson, who appeared in other genre films, including *Fiend Without a Face* (1958) and *First Man into Space* (1959), and played Carruthers in *It!*, seemed to enjoy himself on the set.

Despite the trials and tribulations of production, *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* is an enjoyable picture. Eddie Cahn's direction is mostly uninspired and straightforward, but occasionally makes effective use of darkness and backlighting to create an atmosphere of fear and tension. And while no one really stands out in the cast, no one is really terrible either. In a film with an ensemble cast stuck in one setting, one or two dreadful performances can bring a picture

down faster than one or two inspired performances can elevate it. From a story standpoint, the movie does a great job of keeping the tension and action moving forward. The crew finds out quickly that Carruthers is not the murderer they think he is, and from there it's off to the races. The idea of the crew fleeing the beast by moving ever upward in the ship, until they finally reach the top and run out of room, adds some claustrophobia to the mix, and makes good use of the confined space that the ship provides. The monster itself is generally effective, although it is definitely shown too often and too clearly. The costume is much more frightening when it is seen in shadow or silhouette.

It is interesting that the crew of the ship uses regular pistols, rather than some futuristic ray guns, as was conventional in sci-fi films of the time. No doubt, this choice was made based on budget restrictions, as there would be no optical effects required to make the guns fire. An added bonus to this decision is that the use of basic, recognizable weapons helps ground the film in reality, somehow making it more believable overall. One could argue that the use of standard hand grenades to booby trap the entrance to the vents follows the same logic. But it also raises the question why anyone would want to detonate an explosive within the confines of a space ship!

*It!* opened to moderately positive reviews at the time. While reviewers certainly didn't rank it as an instant classic, they did find it entertaining enough. After the film finished its run, the *It* costume still had one more role to play. Blurred by optical



Two shots from a scene that makes effective use of darkness and shadow. The monster tears down a steel bulkhead and advances on the camera. Backlighting leaves most of the monster's appearance to the viewer's imagination.

effects, it was used to represent the aliens in *Invisible Invaders* (1959).

More than twenty years after its release, *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* was on the minds of many science fiction fans as they watched Ridley Scott's *Alien* (1979). Many maintain that the story of *Alien* is stolen from *It!*. Indeed, many elements are similar, including the confined space ship setting, the unglamorous depiction of space travel, the monster hiding in air ducts, and ultimately an airlock being used to dispatch the beast. However, claims of plagiarism go back even further. Science fiction author A.E. van Vogt claimed that *both* of these films were based on his 1939 book, *Voyage of the Space Beagle*. In all fairness, it should be pointed out that both Ridley Scott and Jerome Bixby have been open about what works directly inspired their respective films, and neither *It* (in the case of Scott) nor *Space Beagle* (in the case of Bixby) have been cited. While the similarities between these works are notable, it is not outside the realm of possibility that they are merely coincidence. After all, if a monster movie is to take place in a space ship, the infinite vacuum that exists outside is an obvious means of dispatching the villain. And the use of secret passages in the old, dark house is a genre staple that is readily updated to the ship's ventilation ducts.

After its initial run, *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* faded from view for decades. It was rarely shown on television, but it did occasionally turn up in screenings at science fiction conventions. Sadly, Paul Blaisdell died in obscurity in 1983, just a short time before a renewed interest in his work surged through fandom. It is interesting that, out of all of Blaisdell's famous creations, only *It!*, featuring possibly his least appreciated monster, has been released on DVD. It is also fortunate, since *It! The Terror from Beyond Space*, for all its faults, does not deserve to languish in obscurity.

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Back in issue 9, I wrote up a brief review of an upcoming PC giant monster game called *They Came from Hollywood*. It's the brainchild of a husband and wife team, who played games like *Crush*, *Crumble*, & *Chomp* and *Mail Order Monster*. Together, they formed a game-development company, Octopus Motor, as a banner under which to develop *They Came from Hollywood*. He is Lars Norpchen, a game designer, programmer, and 3D modeler, who has worked on many games, including *Falcon 3*, *Stunt Driver*, and *Welltris*. He also worked as an Imagineer at Walt Disney Imagineering, developing attractions from Epcot Center and EuroDisney.

The other half of Octopus Motor is Sparky, a game artist, designer, and web designer. She developed the award-winning web site, [phobe.com](http://phobe.com), which has been featured in *Newsweek*, *Entertainment Weekly*, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and on CNN. She has designed and produced game interfaces for Walt Disney Imagineering, various web sites, and even highway signs. Sparky also spent some time at Microleague, an early (and now-extinct) publisher of sports games.

Sparky graciously took the time to answer some questions via e-mail about *They Came from Hollywood*.

**For those of us who don't frequent your web site, can you give us a brief overview of *They Came from Hollywood*?**

*They Came from Hollywood* (TCFH) is a 2D PC game, sort of an action/strategy mix. You're a giant monster. You're suddenly unleashed upon an unsuspecting city. Chaos ensues. There are seven cities: San Francisco, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, New York

City, Seattle, Chicago, and the sleepy desert town of Custer's Tibia, Nevada. All are as realistically laid out as we can make them (using aerial satellite images and maps), with many of the landmarks you know and love (and some you might not know, unless you're a local).

We also support different time periods. SF, DC, Seattle, and NYC are set in modern times. LA is set around World War II, so you'll be fighting off P38 Mustangs, P51s, Hellcats, and Sherman tanks, and knocking down orange trees and old movie studios. Chicago is the Roaring '20s, so you'll encounter biplanes, zeppelins, and armored cars, and stomp on gangsters and flappers in Model Ts. Custer's Tibia is set in the Jet Age/Atomic Age (mid 1950s-'60s), so you'll be relentlessly harassed by F4 Phantoms, F86 Sabres, and AC130s, with M48 tanks on the ground.

Once you arrive on the map, police and SWAT teams will attack first, then the military, bringing in bigger, badder weapons against you. Scientists will show up, trying to get close to you and figure out your weaknesses. Those weaknesses will be reported to the military, and eventually B.A.M.R.O. (the *Brigade of Advanced Monster Response Operations*, or as everyone really calls 'em, *Big-Ass Monster Response Operations*) will bring out weapons made just to defeat you: special tank trucks spraying acid, pesticide, flames, or liquid nitrogen...flying commandos with jetpacks, and armored mechs. Oh, and the press is always there, getting underfoot...their reporting will, like the scientists, help the humans learn more about you - and how best to stop you.

**Is the game a "play until the monster dies" survival challenge, or are there also other goals or scenarios to give individual games focus?**

The game can be played as a simple "play until death" sandbox style, but we also have a dynamic objective hierarchy which provides for short-term goals and rewards. This gives the player some structure and allows the game engine to trigger events based on how the player follows the "script." It's optional, but does provide secondary goals and added interest in making the game play out like movie plotlines. We're going to supply an editor for users to create their own story trees as well.

**How did you pick your monsters, and were there any you ended up dropping?**

All our monsters come from the movies of director/producer Harold Haxton. He made a career out of ripping off all the classic B-movies during the late '40s to the '60s. So we've



Newtrino, the giant newt pays a visit to Madison Square Garden in modern day New York City.

got a giant newt, a robot, a UFO, a 52-foot-tall woman, a crawling alien eyeball and a giant plant. We also added a giant skeleton warrior named Harry (after stop-motion animator Ray Harryhausen), and a giant pea just because...well, we thought it was funny at the time. Bugs were big in the '50s...really big. So we have several of them: a giant ant, giant mantis, and giant spider. The mantis is very fast and can "flit" (hop/jump over things), the giant ant can tunnel underground and shoot acid, and the spider can attack with webs.

We originally had a giant squid, but it turned out he couldn't do much - even though most of our cities feature water, we just didn't think he'd work well. We'll save him for a future expansion. And since we can't make monsters climb buildings right now, we aren't doing a giant ape (well, also, I hate monkeys). We can't support flying monsters yet, so no giant moths, bats, pterodactyls, or swallows (African or European). We considered a giant kitten, which would look very funny, but I couldn't hear taking down a kitten with a howitzer...not even a 40-foot tall one. Call me a big ol' softie, but I always feel bad for the monsters.

As for future monsters (provided the game is popular enough to warrant them), we have one fan who really, *really* wants to see a giant crab, so we'll probably have one of those, or else we'll never hear the end of it. We plan to do a great-cities-of-the-world (Tokyo, Moscow, Paris, London, etc) expansion and a fantasy/historical-oriented one (Ancient Greece, medieval Europe, Victorian London, Mars). They will have new monsters appropriate for those places, like a dragon for medieval Europe, Cyclops for ancient Greece, anime-style gundam for Tokyo. But that's a ways off; we have to finish the game first.

The crab could be neat. Since crabs walk sideways, it could be moving in one direction while facing another. And if one of your fans gets a crab, can I put in my vote for dinosaurs (radioactive or otherwise) in a future expansion?

Well, I recommend that if our fans get crabs, they see a doctor immediately. We didn't include any dinos in the initial lineup because we're already planning on a dinosaur-specific pack, with a selection of the most popular and interesting dinosaurs. There's enough variety in dinosaurs to make for some good dynamics. We'll probably wait until we've implemented non-hovering flight and sea monsters so we can include pterodactyls and plesiosaurs. But be warned, we may take liberties with their scale to make them "giant monsters" relative to the humans.

The bigger, the better. I see from some screenshots that there is/was also a blob monster. Is it still in the game, or has it fallen by the wayside?

The gob is very much on the active roster. It has some special dynamics, like not being "faced" so it can turn and change direction instantly. And since it is viscous, it is immune to physical damage.

You certainly created some extra work for yourselves by having multiple time zones. How did you balance the gameplay for the different eras? Certainly, modern weaponry would be more effective than that from the 1920s. Are the monsters less powerful in the older eras?

There isn't really an attempt at leveling difficulty. Some monsters are just inherently stronger than others, and some eras have less effective weapons. The player can set which military branches are enabled, their aggression level, human preparedness, etc. in a scenario as well, which can have a big influence on the human player's effectiveness. Players can customize their monsters with few limitations. These factors make it impossible to have a completely balanced difficulty leveling - playtesting every combination would have been impossible for a small team like ours. Ultimately, the game is designed to have an open, "sandbox" play style, so we felt it was best to give the player full control (and therefore,

responsibility) for setting how difficult they want to make it. We're looking a rough scoring multiplier factor based on difficulty estimate and heuristics, to provide some measure of comparative success, but that's as far we think is really needed.

Fair enough. In addition to the standard military, are there any other special units players can look forward to?

We've got firefighters, police, Air Force, Navy, and Army units from all eras, plus SWAT and HAZMAT teams in the later eras. We've got a special elite division of the military specifically equipped for giant monster repulsion (B.A.M.R.O.). They have the exotic, more powerful and futuristic weapons to bring against the monster. We've also got some units we file under "wacky": giant armored rubber ducks, firebreathing llamas, superheroes, robot frogs, etc. Those units are rare, but very effective monster deterrents. They can be a bit silly, but giant monsters require a huge amount of suspension of disbelief already, and humor is an important part of *TCFH* (you can always disable these weird units if you want to play a more "serious" monster game).



The giant mantis, under attack in San Francisco.

Do the scientists and the press basically do the same thing in their fact-gathering, or are there aspects that distinguish them from one another?

Scientists make more valuable observations than press, but they have to escape the scene and make it back to the lab to test it before the AI "considers" the data. Similarly, some press (newspaper reporters and photographers) must also escape the scene to file their story and get it "over the wire." But some types of press, like camera operators, radio broadcasters, and newscasters, are capable of sending their news live from the scene, and avoid having to "escape" the scene. We should also note that the press observations aren't really what the reporters understand about the monster, because they aren't really trained in that sort of thing. There is also an implicit assumption that some scientists from around the world are reading the stories, studying the monster footage, etc. and contribute their own scientific observations. But these observations aren't first hand, so they aren't as valuable as those made by the scientists on the scene.

We've also got psychic soldiers (a special division of B.A.M.R.O.), who fight the monster with a mental blast and are sometimes able to establish a "mental link" with the monster. The mental link doesn't happen often, and doesn't always work, but when it does, it can provide the most valuable observations to the humans.

Some monsters are considered "cryptic", and take more study to understand than the average monster.

Since I'm one myself, I love the use of scientists to gather info. If you need a sound bite from an honest-to-goodness real scientist, let me know!



The giant robot tears apart Coney Island. Note the footprints marking his path of destruction.

Actually, we're planning to have little sidebars in the manual that have real-life "What if giant monsters were real?" interviews with real scientists, engineers, soldiers, police, movie special effects designers, etc. that we know. Would you like to be one of 'em? For example, we have commentary from a nuclear waste disposal expert from Lawrence Livermore Labs, an Army weapons testing specialist, a Chicago city planner, an Army Ranger trainer, an insurance lawyer (how would you handle those monster damage claims?). Since you're in genetics, maybe you could tell us something fun about an (im)possible 52-foot woman? Or anything along the lines of "How could a creature get that big? How could we really stop it?"

**You've got it. *TCFH* is going to be playable with the PC Dance Pad, allowing players to control their monster using their own footsteps. How is the implementation on this working out, and what made you decide to include this?**

We were predominately driven by our desire to make our expensive, heavy-duty metal dancepad a tax writeoff. Actually, it was just a silly idea that came to us out of the blue, and it seemed to fit so well that we just had to do it. We've made a simplified, "console game" mode for dance pad play because of the limitations of the controller. Things like grab, throw, objectives, minimap, etc. are eliminated to make it more a young-kid-friendly "run around and collect stuff while smashing things" kind of game.

**Will there be any monster vs. monster gameplay, either against the computer or against other players over the internet?**

No, not in this release. Multiplayer, LAN, or internet play would have added way too much time to our development effort. We're only two people, so we need to stick with what we can realistically accomplish. We're looking at letting a second player play as the humans for a possible 2.0 release, but that's a ways away.

**You've made several comments about expansions and add-ons for *TCFH*. Assuming *TCFH* is the hit it deserves to be, how many expansions do you already have in mind, and how frequently would you like to release them?**



We're planning several expansions, but it's hard to say how many or what each may contain (our crystal ball loses focus that far out). We want to do more cities the world over, and some sci/fi fantasy cities. We've got tons of monsters we'd like to do, and many features we want to add that we don't have time for now. We'll have to judge fan reactions to decide what comes first. As far as how often, well, as quickly as we can produce them. Cities are pretty big time-sinks for us, so a pack that contained a lot of cities would take more time. But I think our goal would be something like two a year, assuming the game proves popular. At some point we'll need to move on to our next project (which will have nothing to do with giant movie monsters).

**Giant monster fighting games, like *Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee* and *Godzilla: Save the Earth* are becoming more popular. What made you decide to move away from the more action-oriented combat game and go for more of a strategy game approach?**

It's partly because those other games do it so well that we didn't feel the need to do that again. Those games are more button-masher combo-moves fighting games, really just *Tekken* or *Mortal Combat* with giant monsters. Fun, but that's not what we wanted to do, and if that's the type of game you want, please buy those games instead! Our focus is more on classic 50's B-movies like *Them!*, *It Came From Beneath The Sea*, and *The Blob*, not daikaiju films and their monster-on-monster action (not that there's anything wrong with them -- we love the Big G). We think there's a lot of gameplay depth in making large detailed cities and swarms of human units the major players in the game design. And personally, we prefer the slower-paced strategic style of gameplay.

**You've been running a "scream donation" on your website for some time, in which fans can send you recordings of their screams of panic for inclusion in the game. What has the response to that been like?**

We've gotten some great stuff -- from very strange shrieks to dialogue from "professional" screamers, like the fabulous George Ledoux (who did many of the voices in the PC games, *Freedom Force* and *Freedom Force vs. The Third Reich*). And we can always use more!

**What has been the biggest challenge so far in *TCFH*?**

Definitely the sheer quantity of assets that need to be produced. The codebase is pretty big, complex, and overwhelming for one person, but the number and variety of assets we need has been even more oppressive. We've developed a lot of scripts, plug-ins, and custom tools to streamline the asset pipeline, but there's just a lot of buildings, animations and map data to be done which sucks up most of our time.

**And, the inevitable final question: any idea of when we'll be able to play *TCFH*?**

People will be playing the game by the end of the year. At this point we aren't sure if those people will be the general public, or just our elite beta testers, but people (other than the two of us) will be playing the game by year's end.

Thanks so much for taking the time to answer my questions, Sparky. I can't wait for the game. Any and all who are interested in *TCFH* should check out the *TCFH* web site at [www.theycamefromhollywood.com](http://www.theycamefromhollywood.com). More information on Harold Haxton and his films can be found at [www.phohe.com/haxton](http://www.phohe.com/haxton).



# The Monsters of GODZILLA FINAL WARS

By Martin Arlt

In December of 2004, Toho Studios released *Godzilla: Final Wars*, Godzilla's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary film. Like *Destroy All Monsters*, over 35 years earlier, *Final Wars* featured an all-star cast of kaiju from Toho's past. While many of the usual suspects returned, this film was marked by the appearance of some of the more obscure Toho creatures, several of whom had only been seen once before! Also notable is the sheer number of monsters in the kaiju cast: fifteen, not counting several others seen in stock footage during the opening credits.

Here, then, is a catalog of the kaiju who appear in *Godzilla: Final Wars*. Americanized names are spelled as they appear in Toho's current promotional material. Alternate spellings of names are in parentheses. The monsters' sizes as they appeared in *Godzilla: Final Wars* are indicated. Special powers and abilities from all film appearances are also noted. Prior appearances only include films in which a monster appeared in original, rather than stock, footage.



## Anguirus (Anguilas, Angilas)

Length – 180 meters

Special abilities: Rolling attack

Number of previous appearances: 5

First appearance: *Godzilla Raids Again* (1955)

Other appearances: *Destroy All Monsters* (1968); *Godzilla vs. Gigan* (1972); *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1973); *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla* (1974).



## Ebirah

Length – 100 meters

Special abilities: None

Number of previous appearances: 1

First and only appearance: *Godzilla vs. the Sea Monster* (1966)



## Gigan

Height – 120 meters

Special abilities: Energy projection, buzzsaws, shooting blades, flight

Number of previous appearances: 2

First appearance: *Godzilla vs. Gigan* (1972)

Other appearances: *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1973)

## Godzilla

Height – 100 meters

Special abilities: Energy projection

Number of previous appearances: 27

First appearance: *Godzilla* (1954)

Other appearances: *Godzilla Raids Again* (1955); *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962); *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1964); *Ghidrah, the Three-Headed Monster* (1964); *Godzilla vs. Monster Zero* (1965); *Godzilla vs. the Sea Monster* (1966); *Son of Godzilla* (1967); *Destroy All Monsters* (1968); *Godzilla's Revenge* (1969); *Godzilla vs. Hedorah* (1971); *Godzilla vs. Gigan* (1972); *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1973); *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla* (1974); *Terror of Mechagodzilla* (1975); *Godzilla 1984* (1984); *Godzilla vs. Biollante* (1989); *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah* (1991); *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1992); *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla* (1993); *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* (1994); *Godzilla vs. Destroyah* (1995); *Godzilla 2000* (1999); *Godzilla x Megaguirus* (2000); *Godzilla Mothra King Ghidorah, Giant Monster All-Out Attack* (2001); *Godzilla x Mechagodzilla* (2002); *Godzilla Mothra Mechagodzilla, Tokyo S.O.S.* (2003)





### **Hedorah (Smog Monster)**

Height – 120 meters

Special abilities: Energy projection, corrosive secretions, flight

Number of previous appearances: 1

First and only appearance: *Godzilla vs. Hedorah* (1971)

### **Kaiser Ghidorah**

Height – 140 meters

Special abilities: Energy projection, energy absorption

First and only appearance: *Godzilla: Final Wars* (2004)



### **Kamacuras (Kamakiras)**

Length – 90 meters

Special abilities: Flight, camouflage

Number of previous appearances: 2

First appearance: *Son of Godzilla* (1967)

Other appearances: *Godzilla's Revenge* (1969)

### **King Caesar (King Seesar)**

Height – 100 meters

Special abilities: Energy beam reflection

Number of previous appearances: 1

First and only appearance: *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla* (1974)





### **Kumonga (Spiega)**

Length – 60 meters

Special abilities: Spider web

Number of previous appearances: 2

First appearance: *Son of Godzilla* (1967)

Other appearances: *Destroy All Monsters* (1968)

### **Manda**

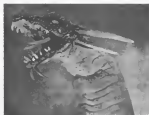
Length – 300 meters

Special abilities: None

Number of previous appearances: 2

First appearance: *Atragon* (1963)

Other appearances: *Destroy All Monsters* (1968)



### **Minilla (Minya, Minira)**

Height – 1.6 to 20 meters

Special abilities: Energy projection

Number of previous appearances: 3

First appearance: *Son of Godzilla* (1967)

Other appearances: *Destroy All Monsters* (1968); *Godzilla's Revenge* (1969)



### **Monster X**

Height – 120 meters

Special abilities: Energy projection, transformation into Kaiser Ghidorah

First and only appearance: *Godzilla: Final Wars* (2004)





### **Mothra**

Length – 72 meters; Wingspan – 216 meters

Special abilities: Poison dust, energy projection, flight

Number of previous appearances: 11

First appearance: *Mothra* (1961)

Other appearances: *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1964); *Ghidrah, the Three-Headed Monster* (1964); *Godzilla vs. the Sea Monster* (1966); *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1992); *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* (1994); *Mothra* (1996); *Mothra 2* (1997); *Mothra 3* (1998); *Godzilla Mothra King Ghidorah, Giant Monster All-Out Attack* (2001); *Godzilla Mothra Mechagodzilla, Tokyo S.O.S.* (2003)

### **Rodan**

Height – 100 meters; Wingspan – 200 meters

Special abilities: Sonic boom, energy projection, flight

Number of previous appearances: 5

First appearance: *Rodan* (1957)

Other appearances: *Ghidrah, the Three-Headed Monster* (1964); *Godzilla vs. Monster Zero* (1965); *Destroy All Monsters* (1968); *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla* (1993)



### **Zilla**

Height – 100 meters

Special abilities: None

Number of previous appearances: 1

First and only appearance: *Godzilla* (U.S. production, 1998)





*[Handwritten signature]*

# COLLECTING DINOSAUR COMICS

By Pat McCauslin & Andrew Simpson



One of the great things about collecting comics is the diversity of collecting interests. Some people collect certain titles, characters, artists, writers, and even companies. Everyone has heard of "Marvel Zombies" who only read Marvel comics. Still others collect comics from certain eras, such as Golden Age or Silver Age.

One of the more interesting areas of comic collecting is that of collecting dinosaur comics. While this sounds simple enough it presents a number of interesting problems. You could probably put ten dinosaur collectors in the same room and not find two that agree on the way to collect. There are two basic collecting interests that need to be discussed as well as a number of parameters.

Some collectors are interested in comics with dinosaur covers, while others are interested in dinosaur stories. The first, longest running and perhaps best of the dinosaur story group would have to be the original *Turok, Son of Stone* which ran 130 issues from 1954-1982. *Turok* wasn't the first comic to have a dinosaur cover or a dinosaur story, but it was the first continuing series to feature dinosaur covers and stories. Most of the covers of the entire series had dinosaurs prominently featured, and all of the stories featured our prehistoric friends. Dinosaurs made their first appearance in comic books in 1936 in *The Funnies* #1 in newspaper reprints of *Alley Oop*. Alley Oop's dinosaur pal Dinny didn't make a cover appearance until *Mammoth Comics* #1 in 1938. Another early dinosaur cover appearance and story was in *Speed Comics* #5 from 1940.

Once you've decided you want to



collect dinosaur comics you have to determine what constitutes a dinosaur. I know what you're saying "everyone knows what a dinosaur is." Well in comics as well as life that's not always true. Do you know what a Dimetrodon, Plesiosaur, Pterosaur, Ichthyosaur, Mammoth, Saber Tooth Cat, and Neanderthal Man all have in common? None of them are dinosaurs. Neither are fire-breathing dragons and space monsters. And what about the everyday items that Fred and Wilma Flintstone use to cut the grass or vacuum the house. They appear to be dinosaurs, but are they? And what about their pet dog Dino does he count? These are all questions that need to be answered. There is no "right" or "wrong" answer. What works for me may not work for you, and that's okay. Even books like the Overstreet Price Guide seem uncertain about what constitutes a dinosaur cover. *Star Spangled War Stories* #107 is listed as a dinosaur cover, but actually pictures a giant crab. Many of the other issues have covers featuring Plesiosaurs or Pterosaurs which, as stated before, are not dinosaurs. I think most collectors would agree with Overstreet's listing since the story that goes with the cover is a dinosaur story.

This article is being written by two people, Pat and Andrew. Pat collects dinosaur covers and Andrew collects dinosaur stories. Pat's criteria for dinosaurs is any creature that lived about 75 million years ago, which would include Trilobites, Ammonites and insects from that era. Andrew's includes prehistoric extinct mammals such as the Mammoth and Smilodon. Pat has chosen to exclude the Flintstones for now, but does include other cartoon dinosaurs such as the cover to *Oswald the Rabbit* from *Four Color Comics* #143. Andrew tries to concentrate on good stories about or involving dinosaurs. Pat doesn't consider movie monsters like Godzilla, Gorgo or Reptisaurus to be dinosaurs. Andrew agrees as to Godzilla, but not the others.

Another area that needs considered is space monsters, dragons, and sea serpents. When, if ever, do they qualify as dinosaurs? And what about the half-man half-dinosaur characters that show up in various superhero comics, like





Stegron the dinosaur man or Sauron from Marvel comics. Do they count? Again it's a matter of personal choice. Most people will include space creatures if they look like a dinosaur, such as in *Blue Bolt* #107. If a sea serpent looks like a Plesiosaur it would count in my book. If it looked like a giant snake it wouldn't. Dragons usually don't make the cut. The half-man half-dinosaur characters are a real tough call, although there are usually other dinosaurs on the cover or in the stories which make the decision much easier.

As I write this I keep thinking of more and more diversions. What about the invisible dinosaur in *Strange Adventures* #133, does it count? What about *Superboy* #111 that depicts dinosaur skeletons, does it count?

As you can see there's no limit to the various aspects of collecting. There is one common thread that ties all this together. It's fun, and no matter what your opinion is it doesn't take away the fun for anyone else. So what is a dinosaur when it comes to collecting comics? Anything you want it to be.

This article is intended as the first in a series of articles which will cover the wide history of dinosaur comics. Future articles might be on individual titles like *Turok* or *Devil Dinosaur*. They might be on characters like *Cavewoman* or *Tor*. Perhaps we'll do one on single appearance comics (one hit wonders). We would love to put together a photo-journal or picture history of the dinosaur comic. Between us we have about 1500 comics with dinosaur covers, and that doesn't even count the ones that only have dinosaur stories. What we need is your input. What do you want to see and read? What are your interests and ideas? We know that you've heard this request a thousand times from every publisher that puts out a new book, but we really mean it. We know we are reaching a very small audience and we hope that with your input we can widen it and still stay true to what we enjoy. Remember the object is to have fun. This is your chance to have fun with us.

You can contact Pat at pat72631@optonline.net or Andrew at Trilobitecomics@yahoo.com. We really do want to hear from you. If you have any information that you think will help us or if you want to try to write an article please feel free to forward it along. Thanks for your support and interest.



## MAD SCIENTIST BACK ISSUE DEPARTMENT:



Issue 1: **SOLD OUT!**



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Issue 4: *Fiend Without a Face*; the *Zombies!!!* Game; Marvel's pre-hero monster comics; Baragon profile; "Tales from the Lab."

Issue 5: *The Man from Planet X*; *The Ghost of Slumber Mountain*; Godzilla at Marvel Part 4; letters from readers; Top 10 E.C. horror comic covers; Mad Scientists in the Luchahero genre; dinosaur drawing by William Stout.

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Issue 10: *The Mysterions*; *Planet of Dinosaurs*; Tales from the Lab tribute to Noriaki Yuasa; Vault of Comics: *Amazing Adventures* #1; cover by Mike Hoffman; art by Rich Larson, Kerry Gammill, & more!

To order a copy of any of these issues of *Mad Scientist* (or additional copies of this issue), send \$3.00 per issue to:

*Mad Scientist*  
c/o Martin Arlt  
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Ann Arbor, MI 48108





# TALES FROM THE LAB

BY MARTIN ARLT



WHILE MOST OF MY FILM ADVENTURES FEATURED STOP-MOTION ANIMATION, THIS MASK WAS USED IN A RARE, LIVE-ACTION PRODUCTION.

IT WAS CALLED "MANTICORE." I'M NOT QUITE SURE WHERE I GOT THE TITLE. I THINK I READ THE WORD IN A BOOK AND THOUGHT IT SOUNDED MENACING.

MY FRIEND TOM RYDEN, STARRED AS A MAD SCIENTIST, WORKING ON SOME MYSTERIOUS CHEMICAL FORMULA.



WE ASSEMBLED A LAB SET IN THE BASEMENT, COMPLETE WITH BITS AND PIECES FROM AN OLD CHEMISTRY SET I HAD.

TOM, HIS HAIR WHITENED WITH FLOUR TO MAKE HIM LOOK OLDER, HAMMED IT UP AS THE SCIENTIST, DRINKING HIS POTION.



THEN, HE MELO-DRAMATICALLY CLUTCHED HIS THROAT AND FELL BENEATH THE TABLE!



ONCE HE WAS OUT OF CAMERA RANGE, I STOPPED THE FILM, GIVING HIM TIME TO PUT ON THE MASK AND A PAIR OF MONSTER CLAW GLOVES.



TRANSFORMATION COMPLETE, I ROLLED FILM AGAIN AND THE MONSTER MADE HIS DRAMATIC ENTRANCE!



NOW A SAVAGE BEAST, THE SCIENTIST-TURNED-MONSTER MADE HIS WAY OUT-DOORS, IN SEARCH OF A VICTIM!



A QUICK JUMP OVER THE FENCE BECAME OUR FIRST STUNT RECORDED ON FILM. IT WAS EVEN A LITTLE DANGEROUS, BECAUSE OF THE MASK'S LIMITED FIELD OF VISION.



THEN, IN THE BACKWARD, MY MOTHER TOOK OVER THE CAMERA, SO I COULD BECOME THE MONSTER'S FIRST VICTIM.



AS MOM FILMED, I WRITHED IN MY DEATH THROES, FAKE BLOOD FROM A TUBE STREAKED ACROSS MY CHEST!

MY POOR MOTHER!

BACK INSIDE, MORE AMBITIOUS STUNTS WERE PERFORMED AS I, IN ANOTHER ROLE, WAS THROWN OVER A BREAKAWAY TABLE!



THEN, IN THE THRILLING CONCLUSION, THE MAD SCIENTIST'S BROTHER ENTERS, SHOOTING THE MONSTER!



BUT THE HERO'S CELEBRATION IS SHORT-LIVED AS THE DEAD MONSTER REVERTS BACK INTO THE FORM OF HIS BROTHER. THE END.



OKAY, IT WAS NO CLASSIC THRILLER, THAT'S FOR SURE.

BUT FROM THIS MODEST BEGINNING, TOM AND I DEVELOPED MORE AMBITIOUS (AND GORY) LIVE-ACTION FOLKS.

WE WORKED ON SCRIPTS AND BUILT PROPS LIKE SEVERED HEADS AND HANDS.

HECK, I EVEN PLANNED SOME SPOOKY LOCATION FOOTAGE TO BE SHOT ON A FAMILY TRIP TO EUROPE!

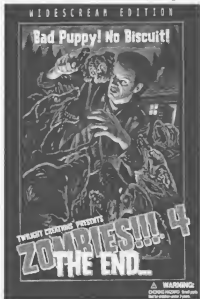
SADLY, NONE OF THE PROJECTS CAME TO PASS, AND "MANTICORE" REMAINS MY ONLY LIVE-ACTION HORROR FILM.



# MAD SCIENTIST'S HAUNTED CRYPT OF REVIEWS!

By Martin Arlt

## ZOMBIES!!! 4: THE END (Twilight Creations)



Twilight Creations is back with a final expansion to the survival horror tile map game, *Zombies!!!* (see previous reviews in *Mad Scientist* #4 and #9). *Zombies!!! 4: The End*, like previous expansions, features new map tiles that can be linked to existing sets via a bridge card, or played by themselves. Whereas previous iterations of the game have focuses on urban areas like cities, malls, and military bases, this set has you running through the mainstay of survival horror, the creepy woods, complete with caves and the occasional campsite or cabin. Since there are no streets to follow, the tiles can be placed in any orientation, making for a much less cluttered gameboard.

While the three previous *Zombies!!!* games have given players the straightforward goal of surviving the hordes of flesh-eating undead, *The End* adds a twist. The goal for this game isn't to reach a helicopter and escape. Instead, you must collect pages from the Book of the Dead, bring them to the cabin in the woods, and undo the spell that has caused all the dead to rise from their graves.

From a gameplay standpoint, there are other differences besides the locale. Obvious changes include the introduction of zombie dogs. These creatures are faster and harder to kill than the human zombies, but they also do less damage per attack. The fact that two dogs can occupy a single space means you can expect

to see swarms of the beasts converging on you in the woods. A less obvious change is the relative scarcity of named tiles, in which players can gain possession of weapons. You will find yourself debating whether or not it is worth the risk to travel through extra tiles filled with monsters in order to reach that out-of-the-way shed that holds a spear.

The pages from the Book of the Dead, scattered about the forest, create an added level of strategy. Collecting multiple pages will increase your chances of undoing the spell and winning the game. However, the pages can also be discarded in order to steal items from opponents, make the trees attack your opponents, and the like. The player must carefully balance the need for keeping pages for the endgame with the advantage of using the game text to hinder his opponent.

Like every other release in this game series, *Zombies!!! 4* is a joy to behold, with simple but fun game mechanics, and outstanding art by Dave Aikins. Keeping the same artist on board has ensured not just quality, but also consistency from set to set. My sources tell me that the *Zombies!!!* license has become too expensive for Twilight Creations, so this really is the end (although other tile games are forthcoming). Fans of the series should definitely check this expansion out, as it is not just "more of the same." And new players shouldn't be afraid to try it out, as it is a standalone game.

#### **MARVEL MASTERWORKS: GOLDEN AGE CAPTAIN AMERICA Vol. 1** (Marvel Comics)

Despite my passion for the genre, I try to keep straight superhero comics out of *Mad Scientist*, because this is supposed to be a fanzine devoted to horror and science fiction. Marvel's latest release in its Masterworks line has prompted me to bend the rules a bit. This hardcover reprints the first four issues of *Captain America Comics*, originally published in 1941. While the lead stories featuring Captain America have been reprinted before, backup stories featuring Tuk the Caveboy and Hurricane are also included, along with ads, front and back covers, and even text features.

This volume showcases Cap and the other heroes battling with giant





zombies, mummies, mad scientists (so it does fit this 'zine after all!), the villainous Red Skull, Adolf Hitler, and even the Devil himself. The art may seem crude by today's standards, but the work by comics legends Simon and Kirby still has a frantic immediacy that newer comics lack. These creators are pushing the boundaries of a brand new art form with their panel shapes and layouts, dynamic figures, and wild scripts.

The print quality of this book is beautiful, which should reassure Golden Age fans who were horrified by the quality of last year's *Marvel Mystery Comics Masterworks*. Marvel has committed itself to quality presentations of these classic books, and they've proven it with this volume.

While the \$50 price tag (cheaper through various online stores) may seem steep, this lovingly-crafted book reprints, in their entirety, four comics that would cost you at least \$10,000 in Good condition (which any comic collector can tell you is anything but) to a total of \$189,000 in Near Mint condition. So consider it a bargain.

### THE MYSTERIANS DVD (Media Blasters/Tokyo Shock)



If you read the article on *The Mysterians* in *Mad Scientist* #10, you know that I am very fond of this film. And I am thrilled to be able to say that the Region 1 DVD of *The Mysterians* is a beautiful release that sets a standard that all future DVDs of Japanese fantasy should strive for. The film is presented in its original, letterboxed form, from a source print that is very clean, with bright colors and dark blacks. Purists can watch the film in Japanese with English subtitles, but there is an option for an English-dubbed soundtrack as well. What really sets this release apart from, say, Sony's recent *Godzilla* releases (which are also very good), is the fact that the commentary track from the Japanese DVD release is intact on this disc, and that it can be accessed in subtitled form. A much

greater understanding of the art of special effects can be had by listening to special effects directors Koichi Kawakita and Shinji Higuchi discuss the making of *The Mysterians*. Heck, if this disc had come out six months earlier, I would have used the commentary track as source material for the article last issue! Japanese sci-fi fans should run out and buy this one now, and keep watch for other Media Blasters Japanese genre releases, including *Varan*, *Matango*, and *Dogora*.



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